

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated 15 November 2005, Applicant offers the following amendment and remarks. Reconsideration and reevaluation of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

5 At page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 37 and 38 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. 2,962,919 to Grundmann, Jr. et al. Additionally, the Examiner rejected claims 1 through 5, 12 through 21, 25 through 29, 35 and 36 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Grundmann et al. in view of U. S. 6,394,201 to Feigel, Jr. et al. Lastly, the Examiner, at page 5 of the Office Action, rejected claims 26, 27, 35 and 36
10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Grundmann et al. in view of Feigel, Jr. et al. as applied to claims 21, 25 and 29 above, and further in view of U.S. 6,845,814 to Mason et al.

Applicant notes that the claims have been amended. For instance, Claim 1 now further contains that the longitudinally disposed slot extends the length of the slip. Additionally, the
15 ledges contained within the slots have a backside. Further, the inserts have shoulders and wherein the shoulder abuts the backside of the ledges as more fully set out in the claims. Please note that no new matter has been added. For instance, please see page 11, line 5 through 7 as well as page 11, lines 19 through 21 and page 11, lines 11 through 13 of the Specification. Additionally, please see Figure 2 and Figure 3a. With reference to the shoulder
20 abutting the backside of the ledge, please see page 14, lines 18 through 22 as well as Figures 3a, 7a, and 8. Additionally, please note that in method claims 37 and 38, it has been added that the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth inserts are individually supported on the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth ledges. Please see page 6, lines 9 through 11 of the specification for support. Also, please see page 6, lines 21 and 22, as well as the top of page 7
25 of the specification. Reference is made to Figures 7a and 8.

With reference to the Grundmann '919 patent, Applicant submits that the '919 describes an invention wherein the angular contact of the teeth with the pipe allows all of the teeth to work against the pipe rather than just two (2) rows at 90 degrees to the direction of loading, as it occurs with the common die teeth (see column 2, lines 4 et seq. of the '919 patent). Column 1, lines 56 et seq. of the '919 patent discloses the diagonally arranged teeth can carry more load than the longitudinally arranged teeth of the ordinary die.

Therefore, the '919 patent is directed toward the gripping dies rather than any transfer of loading. The gripping dies are designed to prevent circular rotation (i.e. rotation about the radial axis) rather than the distribution of the load over the vertical height of the slip as taught by the present invention.

The '919 notes that the buttons 35, which are also referred to as an insert, are inserted in a series of one or more vertically disposed slots 31a which restrains them against rotation (see column 5, lines 54 et seq. of the '919 patent). The buttons 35 may be held in place in the slots by means of the pin 34 in hole 38, in the shank 37 which, in turn, extends outwardly of slots 31a in body members 31 through holes 39 (see column 5, lines 60 et seq. of the '919 patent). Note that the American Heritage Dictionary defines shank as "The long, narrow part of a nail or pin. A stem, stalk or similar part, the stem of an anchor". Therefore, Applicant respectfully represents that the '919 patent does not transfer a load from a shoulder (located on an insert) to a ledge (located within the slot). Additionally, the '919 does not disclose a longitudinal slot that extends the length of a slip. Moreover, the '919 does not show a ledge located within the slip that has a backside and wherein the shoulder abuts the backside of the ledge. Applicant respectfully submits that the '919 transfers the longitudinal load via one face insert to the next adjacent insert in series and therefore, the load will be distributed at the toe of '919 device. Applicant respectfully submits that the '919 is directed towards having the ability of the insert 35 to be reversed 180 degrees and perform equally well (see column 6, lines 13 et

seq. of the '919 patent) thereby preventing rotation about the radial axis.

With reference to Feigel, Jr. et al., Applicant respectfully submits that Feigel does not teach a bowl insert configured to fit into a rotary table on a rig. Feigel teaches the use of a "tubing sipider" (see column 1, lines 14 et seq.). Additionally, Feigel does not teach having
5 multiple inserts per individual slip. For instance, see figure 6 of Feigel, and in particular the gripping die 26 (see column 3, lines 53 et seq.).

Feigel teaches away from Applicant's present invention. For instance, at column 4, lines 65 et seq., Feigel states:

10 The long range of travel of the slips (14) also allows the spider (10) to be configured with narrow angle wedges. Generally, the narrower the angle (closer to vertical), the greater lateral or radial force may be applied through the slips. Therefore, by giving the slips a greater range of travel, the entire range of which is enclosed by the support frame, the spider may have a greater ability to grip the pipe while maintaining the range of slip opening (16) to accommodate drill collars
15 or wider diameter pipe. Therefore, in a preferred embodiment, the wedges present an inclined plane which is a 13 degrees angle from vertical. This angle may vary from 8 degrees to about 20 degrees and the frame dimensions may be varied to provide the necessary size range of slip opening (16).

This clearly shows that Feigel teaches minimum angles relative to vertical. The
20 language of having 8 degrees to about 20 degrees is simply to accommodate large OD tubulars such as drill collars. The range of travel design of Feigel allows for a variable size opening 16. Applicant's invention teaches use of larger angles, relative to vertical. As noted at page 20, lines 21 et seq. of Applicant's Specification:

25 According to the teachings of this invention, the outer portion of the slip in one embodiment may have a taper of greater than 11 degrees; in one preferred

embodiment, the taper is between 11 degrees and 15 degrees; and in the most preferred embodiment, the taper is 12 degrees (as denoted by "A"). It should be noted that the 15 degree taper is denoted by "X".

Additionally, Applicant respectfully submits that Feigel does not teach having shoulders

5 on the inserts that are capable of transferring a load from the shoulders to the ledges in order to distribute the load along the entire length of the first slip, second slip, and third slip. Feigel distributes the load at the bottom of the slip, which is the thinnest section, and hence more susceptible to failure -- a common problem with prior art designs such as Grundmann. Please note that no new matter was added. The prior art devices do not distribute the load along
10 multiple ledges contained on the slip, and therefore, the prior art does not distribute the load along the length of the slip. The prior art devices distribute the load at the bottom section of the slip. For instance, please see page 18 lines 4 et seq., page 19 lines 10 et seq., as well as Figures 7A, 12, and 8 of Applicant's Specification.

As noted in Applicant's Specification at page 17, line 22, in prior art devices, the bottom
15 section would deflect and/or bend outward as denoted by arrow "A" in Figure 7A; this is known as toeing.

Applicant notes that independent claims 1, 12, 21, 29, and 37 have been amended. Applicant respectfully submits that with reference to the obviousness rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), there must be a basis in the art for combining or modifying references. As set out in
20 the MPEP § 2143.01, the mere fact that a reference can be combined or modified, does not render the resultant combination obvious unless the prior art also suggest the desirability of the combination. Most, if not all inventions arise from a combination of old elements. Thus, every element of the claimed invention may often be found in the prior art. However, identification in the prior art of each individual part claimed is insufficient to defeat patentability of the whole
25 claimed invention. Rather, to establish obviousness based on a combination of the elements

disclosed in the prior art, there must be some motivation, suggestion, or teaching of the desirability of making the specification combination that was made by the Applicant (see In Re. Kotzab, 217 F.3d 1365, 55 USPQ 2d 1313 (Fed. Cir. 2000)). Applicant respectfully submits that the prior art does not teach nor suggest a slip containing multiple ledges along the length of the slip, that cooperate with multiple inserts having shoulders, wherein, the shoulders are capable of transferring the load from the shoulders to the ledges.

In conclusion, Applicant respectfully submits that the remaining claims, namely claims 1 through 6, 12 through 21, 25 through 29, and 35 through 38 are now in a position for allowance. Please note that claims 6 through 11 have been withdrawn due to the restriction requirement. If it would aid in disposition of this matter, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned. Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

Respectfully Submitted

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Date

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